

ARTICLE I

Purpose

This Corporation is organized for exclusively religious purposes. Our commission is summarized as follows: "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'" (Matthew 28:18-20).

ARTICLE II

Statement of Faith

See separate doctrinal statement.

ARTICLE III

Ordinances

GCBC recognizes baptism and communion as the two ordinances instituted by Jesus Christ for His Church.

Baptism

The Bible commands every believer to be baptized (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:37-42). Baptism is a public statement and testimony of a person's commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is also a symbolic act illustrating a person's union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3-6). Anyone who desires to be baptized must be interviewed and approved by the Elders who will administer baptism by immersion (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; John 3:23; Acts 8:38-39).

Communion

The Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly as designated by the Elders. All believers are encouraged to participate in this time of remembrance and celebration of the death of Jesus Christ as long as they carefully examine themselves so that they do not take communion in an unworthy manner (Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34).

ARTICLE IV

Church Membership

Section 1. Requirements for Membership

Membership at GCBC shall be open to all persons who profess saving faith in Jesus Christ, showing evidence of regeneration, being baptized as a believer or is willing to be baptized by immersion as a testimony of saving faith in Jesus Christ, and who acknowledges agreement with and willingness to submit to the Doctrinal Statement and By-laws of this Church.

Section 2. Types of Membership

Regular Membership is extended to those who reside in the local area and wish to enjoy the fellowship, privileges, and responsibilities of GCBC throughout the year.

Section 3. Reception of Members

All requests for membership shall be made to the Elders. Upon making such a request, the person shall be given an application for membership, along with a copy of the Doctrinal Statement and the by-laws. After attending the required membership class or listening to the required membership audio series and being interviewed and approved by the Elders, the person will be publicly received into membership during a worship service.

Section 4. Denial of Membership

If, upon review of an application for membership or after meeting with a prospective member, the elders determine that the applicant does not confess Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior, or that there is a lack of evidence of a godly lifestyle, or that they are not willing to abide by these by-laws, membership at that time shall be denied.

Section 5. Responsibilities of Members

Members shall seek to be faithful in the spiritual disciplines essential to the Christian life. This includes walking in conformity to the Scriptures, faithful attendance at the worship services and business meetings of the Church, sacrificial service and financial support as God enables for the establishment and furtherance of the ministries of the Church, and prayer for the Church, its leadership and members.

Section 6. Discipline of Members

GCBC is committed to practicing church discipline as outlined by Christ in Matthew 18:15-17. The threefold purpose of church discipline is (1) to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local Church (1 Corinthians 5:6), (2) to edify believers by deterring sin (1 Timothy 5:20), and (3) to restore a sinning believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).

- (a) The four-step process of church discipline is to be carried out with a gentle, loving, and humble attitude (Hebrews 12:5-13). Members of the church and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with the church who persist in grievous doctrinal error, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by the Board of Elders, shall be subject to church discipline, including dismissal according to Matthew 18:15-18. These actions are not at all intended for every case of sin or deviation from the truth, but for persistent and unrepentant sins that damage the church, weaken its testimony, or promote disunity. Such sins include, but are not limited to, heresy (1 Timothy 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; Titus 3:10-11; 2 John 10-11; Revelation 2:14), divisiveness (Romans 16:17-18; Titus 3:10-11), unruly, undisciplined, and irresponsible living (2 Thessalonians 3:6,11,14) disruptive conflict between members (Matthew 18:15-18; Philippians 4:2-3; 1 Corinthians 6:1-6), and the many forms of carnality and immorality (1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 6:9-10; Galatians 5:17-21; Ephesians 5:3-5).
- (b) For persistent and unrepentant sins that damage the church, the following steps should be taken in the church discipline procedure: (1) It shall be the duty of any member of the Church who has knowledge of the erring individual's heresy or misconduct to warn and correct them in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring individual does not heed this warning, then (2) The warning member shall again go to the erring individual, seeking his or her repentance, but accompanied by one or two individuals who shall confirm that the sin has occurred or is continuing to occur, and/or that the erring individual has been appropriately confronted and has refused to repent. If the erring individual still refuses to heed this warning, then (3) It shall be brought to the attention of the elders. If the Elders find after thorough investigation that the erring individual is continuing to sin, that he or she has been appropriately confronted, and that he or she has refused to repent, then the Elders shall inform the Church (i.e. the congregation) at a regularly scheduled worship service in order that the entire church may call the erring individual to repentance. If the erring individual demonstrates repentance, then notice to that effect may be given at a regularly scheduled worship service. If, however, the erring individual does not repent in response to the church in its collective call to repentance, then (4) The individual shall be publicly dismissed from membership and/or fellowship in the church at a regularly scheduled worship service. If the erring individual, after such dismissal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests reinstatement before the Elders, then he or she shall be publicly restored to all the rights, duties, privileges, and responsibilities of membership and/or fellowship (2 Corinthians 2:6-8).

- (c) The Elders, at their discretion, may proceed directly to the third stage of church discipline (i.e. the informing of the church and the congregation at a regularly scheduled worship service in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance) and then to the fourth stage of church discipline, (i.e. the dismissal from membership and/or fellowship in the church) when one or more of the following have occurred;
 - (i) Where the transgression and the refusal to repent have become a public offense to the whole church (1 Corinthians 5:1-5).
 - (ii) Where the first and second stages of church discipline have effectively occurred simultaneously.
 - (iii) Where the disciplined party has taught or otherwise disseminated doctrine deemed false or erroneous by the Elders, then chosen to disregard the direction and reproof of the Elders (Romans 16:17).
 - (iv) Where the disciplined party has been warned twice by the Elders to cease from factious and divisive conduct and has chosen to disregard that warning (Titus 3:10-11).
- (d) The members of the church, and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with the church, agree that there shall be no appeal to any court because of the dismissal or because of public statements to the congregation at the third or fourth stages of church discipline. Members under discipline who chose to resign their membership may still be lovingly pursued to restore them to fellowship.

Section 7. Removal of Members

Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of the Elders, a member or regular attendee, or other individual may be notified that he or she is not to be present at GCBC gatherings for such a period of time as is deemed necessary for the safety or well-being of others in the church. Such required absence may, but need not be, concurrent with church discipline of that person. Also, the elders may remove from membership the name of any member who has transferred their membership to another church or has not attended a worship service for a period of six months or longer. Reasonable effort will be made to contact such a member before he or she is removed from membership.

ARTICLE V Meetings

Section 1. Membership Meetings

At the discretion of the Elders a membership meeting may be held. At such membership meetings, the members shall consider reports of the affairs of the church, and transact any other business the Elders bring before the meeting, including but not limited to affirmation of the appointments made by the Elders of those who shall serve as Elders along with those who are recognized as serving as Deacons. The Chairman of the Elders will preside at this and any other special meetings of the church to ensure that they are conducted according to the principles of God's Word.

Section 2. Affirmation By Members

Those admitted to church membership do not constitute a legislative body, nor do they constitute members of the Corporation, and they cannot vote, pass resolutions binding upon the Corporation, nor shall they have any equity in the property of the Corporation, or rights to vote on its disposal. However, members have the opportunity to affirm those matters that the Elders present to the membership at any membership meeting. This privilege is open to all members who are not under any disciplinary action and who are at least 18 years old.

ARTICLE VI

Church Government

Section 1. Authority of Elders

GCBC acknowledges the Lord Jesus Christ as its head who ultimately rules over the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18). Christ mediates His ruling authority in the church through godly servant-leaders called Elders who are entrusted by the Holy Spirit with the responsibility of overseeing and shepherding the flock of God (Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:7, 17; James 5:14-15; 1 Peter 5:1-5). Based on this pattern followed by the local churches in the New Testament, all the physical and spiritual matters of GCBC shall be managed with humility, sensitivity, and unanimity by the Elders who will be required to give an account to God for their ministry. The divinely delegated authority of the Elders includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) To select and remove Elders, pastors, staff, and employees of the Church; prescribe their duties and fix the terms of their offices and their compensation.
- (b) To supervise and control the funds and all properties of the church.
- (c) To establish policies and practices for the Church consistent with the Scriptures, the GCBC Doctrinal Statement, and its by-laws.
- (d) To resolve any disputes that arise among the members, pastors, or staff regarding any matter of spiritual teaching or practices or Church policies, procedures, purchases, or finances.

Section 2. Number and Tenure of Elders

The number of Elders at GCBC will be determined by the Elders based upon need and availability of men who have a desire to be an Elder and who are qualified to be an elder (1 Timothy 3:1-7). A man may serve as an Elder as long as he has the desire to be an Elder and remains qualified as an Elder. The qualification of every Elder will be regularly evaluated by the other Elders.

Section 3. Selection of Elders

At the discretion of the Elders, recommendations may be requested from all church members of those men who they consider qualified to serve as an Elder. The Elders shall review all recommendations and determine each man's qualifications. Those men whom the Elders select to serve as an elder will be presented to the congregation for their affirmation.

Section 4. Qualification of Elders

Each Elder must be an active member of the Church and possess the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. He must:

- (a) A man with an earnest, heartfelt desire to serve as an Overseer (1 Timothy 3:1)
- (a) Live a blameless life that is above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6-7)
- (b) Be devoted exclusively to his wife with all purity (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6)
- (c) Lead a self-controlled, well-balanced life (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- (d) Be sensible and wise, exercising good judgment (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- (e) Maintain an organized, well-ordered lifestyle (1 Timothy 3:2)
- (f) Be hospitable; being gracious and generous toward others (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- (g) Know the Word of God and be able to teach it to others (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9)
- (h) Not be addicted to alcohol (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- (i) Not be quarrelsome, quick-tempered, or belligerent (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)
- (j) Be gentle and patient in dealing with people (1 Timothy 3:3)
- (k) Not be self-willed or arrogant (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- (l) Be honest and not greedily seek personal or financial gain (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)
- (m) Effectively manage his family and all the affairs of his household (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:7)

- (n) Not be a new convert but a mature Christian (1 Timothy 3:6)
- (o) Be well respected, having a good reputation outside the Church (1 Timothy 3:7)
- (p) Be a lover of good men and good things (Titus 1:8)
- (q) Handle things in a way that is just and fair (Titus 1:8)
- (r) Be holy and devout (Titus 1:8)

Section 5. Resignation and Removal of Elders

An Elder may resign from his position at any time. An Elder may be removed by the other Elders if he is found to be mentally incapacitated or spiritually unqualified (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). It is the responsibility of every member to inform the Elders of any action by an Elder that brings reproach upon the Church. Such an accusation will be thoroughly investigated and resolved to the satisfaction of the Elders. If an Elder is removed because of sin that is deemed sufficient to disqualify him from shepherding, and if he refuses to repent from that sin, the removal shall be accompanied by a public rebuke before the entire Church at a regularly scheduled worship service (1 Timothy 5:19-22).

Section 6. Meetings of the Elders

Regular or special meetings of the Elders will be called by the Elders. The Elders shall choose from among themselves a Chairman and a Secretary who will serve in those capacities until they resign or are replaced by the Elders at their discretion. The Chairman will preside over the Elder meetings to ensure that they are conducted according to the principles of God's Word. The Secretary will keep the minutes of all meetings and maintain the records of the Church.

Section 7. Decisions of the Elders

In order for GCBC to achieve and maintain the unity that Jesus Christ desires for His Church, the Elders must be united (John 17:21-23; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:1-6; Philippians 1:27). Unity among the leadership is best expressed by unanimity. If the Elders cannot agree on a particular issue regarding biblical principles, they will take additional time to pray and study God's Word together until they come to a unanimous decision. In areas of personal preference, the Elders will maturely defer to one another with humility (Philippians 2:1-4). When considering the removal of an Elder or Pastor-Teacher, the person being considered for removal will not be included in determining that a unanimous decision has been reached. If only two Elders are present, both Elders will seek outside counsel and accountability from like-minded Pastors and Elders.

Section 8. Rights of Inspection

Each Elder shall have the right of inspection of all books, records, documents, and physical properties of the Corporation.

Section 9. Delegation of the Elders

From time to time the Elders may delegate certain tasks and responsibilities to qualified individuals who can assist them with the practical duties involved in shepherding the flock, and thereby, free them to fulfill their pastoral priorities (Exodus 18:13-27; Acts 6:1-6). Those individuals who faithfully serve alongside the Elders may be recognized as Deacons.

The Deacons minister to the body by performing various acts of service as a co-laborer with the Elders in the local church (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-14), put in charge to lead or oversee specific ministries of the Church, under the oversight of the Elders. The Deacons shall assist the Elders in the shepherding of the saints, assist the Pastor-Teacher at communion and baptismal services, aid in the general spiritual care of the Church, and/or perform other duties as assigned by the Board of Elders. The Deacons shall be men who are members of the Church in good standing, possessing the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

ARTICLE VII The Pastor-Teacher

Section 1. Selection

The Pastor-Teacher shall be selected by the Elders and presented to the members of the Church for their affirmation at a special meeting called by the Elders. He shall remain in that position for an indefinite period of time subject to the following reservations: the Elders reserve the right to dismiss the Pastor-Teacher upon giving him one month's written notice of their intention to dismiss; the Pastor-Teacher must give one month's notice if he intends to resign. The time limit of a Pastor-Teacher's resignation or dismissal is subject to a lesser time if both the Pastor-Teacher and the Elders deem necessary.

Section 2. Duties

The primary responsibility of the Pastor-Teacher is to equip the members of the Church for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12) by studying and preaching/teaching God's Word and by praying for them (Acts 6:4). Other duties include providing the overall vision and direction for the Church, developing and leading a pastoral staff which can work together as a team to minister to the Church, arranging all the regular services of the church, administering the ordinances of the church, conducting weddings and funerals, and counseling those individuals struggling with personal, spiritual problems. The Pastor-Teacher will be an Elder held accountable by the other Elders.

ARTICLE VIII Ordination, Licensing, and Commissioning

Section 1. Ordination

Ordination refers to the unanimous recognition by the elders of a man's call to and qualification/preparation for full-time pastoral ministry. Ordination shall be conferred for life, so long as the man continues to manifest the qualifications of the office.

Section 2. Licensing

Licensing applies to those who are involved in ministry on a part-time basis or who are bi-vocational. The Elders' authorization allows them to perform the pastoral duties and functions of the Church. Licenses will be evaluated and issued on a regular basis.

Section 3. Commissioning

When ordination or licensing is unnecessary or inappropriate, a person is commissioned by the elders to minister. This authorization continues as long as the opportunity to minister remains in effect and as long as the person maintains the qualifications for ministry (i.e. missionary).

ARTICLE IX Financial Provisions

Section 1. Treasurer

The Elders shall ensure the proper stewardship of the physical and financial resources of GCBC. If they choose, they may appoint a Treasurer(s) from among the members of the Church to implement and accomplish this responsibility. The Treasurer(s) shall ensure that all financial activities and transactions are consistent with these by-laws. The Treasurer(s) shall keep and maintain adequate and correct accounts of the properties and business transactions of the Church, deposit all monies and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the Church with such depositories as may be designated by the Elders, disburse the funds of the Church as may be directed by the Elders, render to the Elders, whenever they request it, an account of all the transactions and of the financial condition of the church, and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Elders.

Section 2. Endorsement of Checks, Contracts, and Other Documents

The Elders may authorize any officer or officers to enter into any contract or execute any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Church. All checks, drafts, demands for money and notes of the church, and all written contracts of the church, shall be signed by such officer or officers in order for them to be binding.

Section 3. Records and Reports

The Church shall maintain adequate and correct accounts, books, and records of its business and properties. All such books, records and accounts shall be kept at its principal office in the State of Texas. Financial reports shall be made available to individual members as requested.

Section 4. Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the corporation, the Elder Board shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the corporation, distribute any assets of the corporation to one or more organizations recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as one organized exclusively for Christian beliefs and purposes similar to those outlined in Articles I and II of these by-laws of Grace Community Bible Church or a similar Church willing to accept the assets and/or debts.

Section 5. Indemnification

GCBC may indemnify a person against reasonable expenses incurred by him in connection with a proceeding which he is threatened or named as a defendant or respondent because he is or was an Elder, Pastor-Teacher, Deacon, Deaconess, officer, employee or agent of GCBC if it is determined that he acted in accordance with these by-laws. These provisions are intended to be consistent with the provisions of Article 1396-2:22A of the Texas Nonprofit Corporation Act.

**ARTICLE XI
Amendments**

These by-laws and the Doctrinal Statement of GCBC may be altered, amended, repealed, or replaced by the unanimous decision of the Elders at any regular or special meeting of the Elders.

CERTIFICATE

I, the undersigned, being the Secretary of Grace Community Bible Church, do hereby certify that the above by-laws were adopted as the by-laws hereof on the _____, by the Elders of the Church in a regularly called meeting of the Elders on the same date, to wit, the _____. Said by-laws are, as of the date of the certification, the duly adopted and existing by-laws of this Church.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this _____.

Raymond G. Matlock, Secretary